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The Official and Courier Mail Systems of East Germany
Part X

by Helmut Weigelt

translated by Richard Zerbe

(Continuation of the story from Vol. 9 Nr. 2)

The Postage Exempt Verwaltungspost A

In general, in the philatelic press, when writing about official mail in the DDR, the starting assumption has been that the introduction of official stamps, and the creation of special forwarding procedures for official mail, was the result of alleged espionage and sabotage activities on the part of "Western" agents. Indeed, the texts of many laws and orders of the DDR bear out this assumption. There is, however, an additional point. When official stamps were introduced on August 15, 1954, the government of the DDR, despite the concomitant rules and regulations governing official mail, still did not have the degree of security and control over mail in transit that it desired.

Ultimately, this led to the issuance of a directive on September 26, 1955, by the minister of the interior, in which he ordered the establishment of the Verwaltungspost A. It should be understood that this order neither superceded nor replaced the Verwaltungspost, so that both systems operated concurrently (see section II).

Parts of the September 26, 1955 directive are quoted in the introduction of a booklet, which contained the later order (promulgated April 23, 1958) establishing the Zentraler Kurierdienst. At that time, this booklet was distributed to responsible personnel in various government organizations and agencies. This introduction stated:

"At present, general correspondence between the main offices of various organizations, institutions, and agencies of government in Berlin, and state organizations, institutions, agencies and VEB industries in the German Democratic Republic, does not possess the desired degree of security, in that it offers possibilities to imperialist espionage and sabotage facilities to limit or to disrupt the activities of various state regulatory or economic organizations by such methods as the surreptitious introduction into the mails of falsified or forged documents of various sorts.

"For this reason, it is necessary to find a more secure method of forwarding mail to and from Berlin.

"Therefore, in compliance with the assignment given me by the Council of Ministers on July 14, 1955,

"I order that:

"1. In order to process the mail of the main state organizations, institutions, and agencies, a Zentraler Kurierdienst (Central Courier Service) be established within the Ministry of the Interior. It will begin its function on October 10, 1955, and will make use of the facilities of the main post office.

"Berlin, September 26, 1955

"signed: Maron, Minister of the Interior

By way of explanation, one must note that the term "Zentraler Kurierdienst" was used by government officials from the start to designate this

entire new organization, which used the facilities of the post office, without being a part of the post office department itself. In order to differentiate between the two methods of forwarding mail, the mail processed through the Zentraler Kurierdienst was designated as "Verwaltungspost A".

The "Verwaltungspost A" represented a particularly high security method for the forwarding of official mail to and from Berlin, meaning, of course, the so-called "Democratic Sector of Greater Berlin". Thus, the Verwaltungspost A was used for correspondence between such institutions as, for example, county councils and ministries in Berlin.

But the Verwaltungspost A could not be used for correspondence between various county councils, or for mail between county and district councils, or for mail to private individuals. Such correspondence continued to be handled by Verwaltungspost, just as it had been before the establishment of Verwaltungspost A. This shows the principle difference between the two special processing methods.

Obviously, mail to be handled or forwarded by Verwaltungspost A could not simply be dropped into a mailbox. Rather, it had to be taken to a special counter at a specially designated post office. As a special precaution against having unauthorized material slipped into the service, the person bringing the mail to the post office was also required to present a special identification card.

It should be noted that all mail processed through the Verwaltungspost A was forwarded without any franking, nor were any postage due fees collected.

The regular daily cancellation was applied on the front of each piece of mail upon receipt at the post office. A second cancellation was applied on the back of the envelope when it was despatched from the post office.

All mail from points in the DDR was directed to the Berlin O 17 post office, where a third cancellation, a cancellation documenting its receipt, was applied on the back of the item. Any piece of mail which did not show the posting town cancellation on the front, and the despatching and receiving cancellations on the back, was automatically suspect, since it did not bear proof that it had been properly in the Verwaltungspost A forwarding service. Upon receipt, it was immediately sorted out, and forwarded to an investigative office, which was responsible for making a thorough check of such matters.

Mail which was despatched from the "democratic sector of Greater Berlin", had to be posted at the Berlin O 17 office, where a red cancellation was applied. This cancellation had in the upper half, the inscription "Berlin O 17", and in the lower half, the word "bezahlt" (paid). This cancellation is known to exist with the following letters which identify the individual cancellation device: "a", "ai", "ah", and "ag", all of which were hand-cancellers, and "ak", which was a machine canceller.

The despatch cancellation, which was applied to the back of the envelope was similar to the red cancellation, but without the word "bezahlt" and was in black. Like the red cancellation, several devices, each with its own identifying letter, were used.

All mail coming from Berlin received the cancellation of the destination town on the back, so that in this case too, any given piece of mail had three cancellations which documented the fact that it had been properly handled.

It is possible that all five cancelling devices (with the five identifying letters) were used from the very beginning of the Verwaltungspost A on October 10, 1955, but that can no longer be proved. Investigation has shown the following period of use for each of the cancelling devices.

Identifying letter	Period of Use
a	Oct. 10, 1955 until Jan. 13, 1956
ai	Oct. 20, 1955 until Jan. 18, 1956
ah	Jan. 18, 1956 until Jan. 29, 1956
ag	Feb. 1, 1956 until Mar. 31, 1956
ak	Oct. 18, 1955 until Dec. 28, 1955

The Verwaltungspost A, as it has been described here, was discontinued, along with the Verwaltungspost, on March 31, 1956.

This discussion should serve to clarify the confusion created by the inconsistent terminology used by Heimann and Jahn for this procedure for the handling of official mail. They used the terms "Verwaltungspost Berlin" and "Verwaltungspost" respectively. Both are inconsistent and misleading. The correct term, as has already been explained, is "Verwaltungspost A".

However, since the forwarding routine which was put into effect on April 1, 1956 (see Section XI) was also designated (officially) "Verwaltungspost A", it is helpful to differentiate the two, and to distinguish the process described in this section as the "Postage-exempt Verwaltungspost A".

Possibly the incorrect terminology used by Heimann and Jahn is due to the fact that, while many collectors recognized the red cancellation of the Berlin O 17 post office, they did not recognize items which were forwarded through the "postage-exempt Verwaltungspost A" to Berlin; and indeed, such covers are quite scarce. There are two possible explanations for this. First of all, covers of this type are not generally of interest to many - if not most - collectors, since there is no franking. Secondly, it is quite possible that the Ministries in Berlin took special precautions to prevent covers of this type from getting into the hands of collectors.

But there is also a third possibility which may not be discounted, namely, that collectors simply did not recognize this Berlin destined mail for what it was.

For example, Jahn, in the loose-leaf edition of his hand-book, in the Verwaltungspost section, illustrated, on page 46, a very interesting cover, which is addressed to "Das Staatliche Vertragsgericht bei der Regierung der DDR, Referat Statistik", Berlin O 17, Postschliessfach 117. The cover was sent by the "Staatliche Vertragsgericht im Bezirk Cottbus", Cottbus, Karl-Leibknechtstr. 6, and carries its "Briefstempel". The address was typed, as was the inscription "Verwaltungswertpost" along the top margin of the envelope. The letter is not franked, and is postmarked "Cottbus 2 k, 3.3.56, 12-13".

In connection with this illustration, Jahn comments, "The illustrated letter was posted on March 3, 1956. On the back it carries the postmarks of the sending and receiving post offices. It also carries the so-called Briefstempel of the sender as a seal. Unusual is the fact that the legend "Verwaltungswertpost" is crossed out even though the letter in all probability was processed as Verwaltungswertpost without necessarily collecting

postage or postage due fees."

Jahn is mistaken when he categorizes this letter as a Verwaltungswertpost. The crossing out only pertains to the syllable "wert" and not the entire word. Verwaltungswertpost, a claim readily supported by the illustration. Through this nullification of a syllable, the term Verwaltungspost was produced. In the transition, the addition of the letter "A" behind it was forgotten, but then, this was not required. Sufficient for recognition as Verwaltungspost A was the postage-exempt forwarding of the letter and the listing of an East Berlin post office box number in the address.

The letter under discussion here is a letter forwarded through the postage-exempt Verwaltungspost A to Berlin, and as such is one of the rarities of the official mail of the Soviet Zone.

In closing, it remains only to note that each of the ministries, institutions and agencies in East Berlin had a post office box assigned to it in the Berlin O 17 office. As a result, each also had a post office box number as part of its address. This post office box number was a required part of the address. The post office box number was also sufficient evidence to categorize a letter as being sent to Berlin as Verwaltungspost A.

Catalog Section for Part X

1. Unfranked letters with red postmark "Berlin O 17 - bezahlt" and identification letters.

- a) "a"
- b) "ag"
- c) "ah"
- d) "ai"
- e) "ak"

a through d exist as hand cancels only, e exists as a machine cancel only.

2. Unfranked letters bearing black postmarks, addressed to government bodies located in East Berlin, and showing post office box numbers in their addresses.

3. Letters with notations to the effect that the addressee is not a participant in the Verwaltungspost A service.

* * * * *

What is the Significance of the HAMBURG/KIEL Registry Label?

by Donald Slawson

I presume we are all familiar with the use of registry labels as 30 Pfg. stamps by the RPD's Hamburg and Kiel. These are pictured and discussed under the respective towns in the "Lokalausgaben" section of Michel. For quite a while I have been meaning to question the significance of these covers, however, it is only recently I have been spurred to action by the appearance in auction of registered covers from Bavaria carrying a 12Pfg. AMG stamp, a registry label, and a "Gebühr bezahlt" notation. The description of these covers reads "...like the OPD Hamburg/Kiel covers", and they carry a fancy price.

What is the significance of the RPD Hamburg/Kiel use of the registry labels? Is this really a ZOPfg. provisional stamp valid only for registry fee? Does the presence of a "postage paid" (Gebühr bezahlt, Gebühr verrichtet, etc.) mark negate any significance inherent in the registry label? If a postage paid mark is present does it matter if it is on the cover or on the registry label itself?

Most of the RPD Hamburg/Kiel covers I have seen carry a "Gebühr bezahlt" notation. It is my opinion that the application of this notation completely destroys any significance the cover may have. Once this mark has been applied, it is not the registry label, but the Gebühr bezahlt mark which denotes the payment of fees. Thus the cover is reduced to the status of a cover partially franked with stamps, partially franked with a "paid" mark (these are discussed by Michel in the "Deutschland unter Alliierte Besetzung" section).

Should these covers carry a "postage paid" notation? As best I can translate Michel (the verb tenses kill me, and I cannot find anything in my dictionary about the word "nie", but assume it's a negate word) the order of OPD Hamburg specified that the label should bear the "Gebühr bezahlt" notation. This makes sense to me, for since the covers could be destined outside the RPD's Hamburg/Kiel, they should bear some indication all fees had been paid. Otherwise, they would have been charged postage due. The other RPD's would not recognize the registry label as a payment of fees.

Is the fact that the RPD's Hamburg/Kiel issued orders calling for the use of the registry labels with inscription "post paid" significant? My current opinion is "I see no reason for it, nor any real significance to these orders". In fact, I wonder why these RPD's felt it necessary to issue an order covering a temporary stamp shortage situation. This eventuality was covered by the post office regulations, and many towns in all occupation zones were able to figure out what to do in a stamp shortage situation without the benefit of a directive from their RPD. Thus the orders of RPD's Hamburg/Kiel seem merely to confirm a practice outlined in the postal regulations and are superfluous.

Given the fact that these RPD's did issue their decrees, does it matter if the "Gebühr bezahlt" mark was applied to the registry label or to the cover itself? Conceptually, I would say "no". A "Gebühr bezahlt" mark is a "Gebühr bezahlt" mark, and where it is applied has little significance. The important thing is that it (not the registry label) denotes the payment of the postal fees. I have, in the previous sentence, not only taken a shot at the Hamburg/Kiel registry labels, but also at any "Gebührenzettel" (such as the Brackwede item pictured in our April 1977 bulletin) which carries no notation of fee or on which the fee was entered at the time of sale. I claim that conceptually these frankings are all the same, and are exactly the same as an ordinary "Gebühr bezahlt" cover. What has varied is the implementation of the concept.

The above conclusion is based on the assumption that the Hamburg/Kiel registry labels, the "Gebührenzettel" with no preset value, and ordinary "Gebühr bezahlt" covers were all handled in the same manner by the post office. In these cases the fee was collected at the time of mailing, and entered into the transaction books of the post office at that time. Whether or not the words "gebühr bezahlt" were preprinted on a gummed label, registry label, etc., or whether they were printed at the time the cover was handed over to the post office is of absolutely no consequence.

However, the possibility exists that the Hamburg/Kiel registry labels were not handled in this manner. Conceptually they could be similar to the "Gebührenzettel" with a prescribed value. This would mean that the registry labels were given an implied (not inscribed) value of 30Pfg. The labels are counted, and then entered into the transaction books of the post office as a consignment of stamps of value .30RM times the number of labels. In this case, for usage, all the postal clerk had to do was tear a label off the roll and use it, applying the "Gebühr bezahlt" notation if it had not already been done. No bookkeeping entry was necessary at the time of use. Of course, "remainders" of the roll of labels would have to be accounted for, just as stamps.

If this latter were the case, then we have a whole different ballgame. In this case the registry label would be acting as a special Postmaster provisional (maybe "RPD Provisional" would be a more apt term) with an implied value of 30Pfg., and valid only to pay the registry fee.

I believe the registry labels were accounted for at the time of sale, and thus of no real significance. However, if it could be shown that they were accounted for prior to sale, then my opinion of these must change, if not drastically, at least to a degree. The crux of the matter seems to be in the method used in accounting for these registry labels. Perhaps some of our German friends can check with the OPD's Hamburg and Kiel to determine for certain the accounting procedure used for these labels.

A final question remains: What about the covers which carry no "Gebühr bezahlt" notation? If my interpretation of the orders is correct and they did call for this notation to be applied, then what can we say other than a mistake was made, a not unusual occurrence in the 1945 period. However, if no postage due was charged, then the registry label did function as a 30Pfg. stamp, even if it should not have. This should only be possible if both the sending and receiving offices were in RPD's Hamburg/Kiel. Here, due to the decrees of the RPD's, the label itself may have been recognized as denoting that the fee had been paid. In this case the cover provides interesting documentation of the fact that there was a special action taken in these two RPD's. However, I think I may still argue about the significance of this. Interesting? Definitely! Significant? I'm not so sure.

I will welcome comments and the thoughts of others on this subject. Perhaps some of my assumptions are wrong, or my reasoning faulty. I'll be pleased to hear your opinions on these Hamburg/Kiel registry labels, particularly those which claim some significance to the labels.

* * * * *

A COUPLE THURINGIAN ITEMS OF INTEREST

submitted by K. Alfred Geisser

The items pictured on the next page appeared in a recent issue of the ARGE-Brief of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Thüringen SBZ/OPD-Ausgaben. (ed note-I have previously called this the ARGE "Thüringen, but now discover that they cover all OPD issues, and in their April 1977 bulletin is even an item of cork obliteration. This group may be worth considering joining)

The two souvenir sheets show examples of the shifted placement of

stamps which may be encountered on the Antifa sheet. The only shift listed by Michel is a downward shift of the center stamp, but obviously others exist.

The gutter strip is significant mainly in the fact that it was never sold over the postal counters. This material reached the philatelic market "unofficially", either being stolen at the printers ("printers waste"), or by being appropriated by someone "in-the-know" at the post office for his own personal gain. Either way, they did not reach the public over the postal counters.

A study of the varieties in these gutter strips show that the strips recently sold in both the Salomon and Grobe auctions are from the same positions, indicating that 2 sheets (20 pairs) or more exist.



POSTVERKEHR IM SPRUCHVERFAHREN

by Richard H. Imus
 American Embassy
 FPO San Francisco 96690

The notation contained in the article's title (Postal Communications in Connection with Court Proceedings) is contained on a stampless cover which has remained a puzzle in my postwar postal history collection for some years. The item in question bears the return address: Heinrich Klie, Wellesley-Barracks, BAOR 11, Braunschweig. It is postmarked at Braunschweig on May 7, 1948 and bears a three line rubber stamp reading: "Internierten-Post / Gebühren Frei / Nr. 2 W.C.H.C." An inquiry to the Germany and Colonies Philatelic Society membership in the U.K. brought no response, so it was only recently that I myself stumbled upon a bit of information which finally clarified the situation.

According to an order dated March 31, 1947, internees who had been detained as a result of the denazification proceedings could write to lawyers and witnesses postage free provided that such correspondence was inscribed "Postverkehr im Spruchverfahren". As the cover in question is addressed to a lawyer, it fits the bill perfectly. The question remaining is the meaning of the handstamp. Could "W.C.H.C." stand for War Crimes High Commission? Any information from fellow members would be greatly appreciated.

This is the only special postal item that I know of dealing with postal privileges of individuals involved in denazification proceedings. This item is from the British Zone but are there like items from the American and French? The Americans were known for their zeal at denazification proceedings, so I would expect more postal documents from this zone than any other.

The only other items pertaining to this general theme that I have in my collection are an envelope from the Denazification Court at Darmstadt (Spruchkammer), franked with a 24 pf. carpet posthorn overprint, and a cover from the Spruchkammer at Bad Mergentheim which bears a standard straight line "Gebühr bezahlt" franking.

Who can make further contributions?

* * * * *

OBLITERATED NAZI ISSUE NOTES
compiled by Donald Slawson

As a lead-off, we have a very interesting piece by one of our German members.

Beware of GLAUCHAU Cover Forgeries
by Roman Slaboch

In the "Deutschland-Sammler", Number 2 of 1 February, 1972, page 30, there was a warning about two dubious cancels found on Glauchau overprinted stamps.

First, the cancel "GLAUCHAU 2-Q- 21.6.45" which has emerged in conjunction with forged Glauchau overprints. In the above mentioned article it was conjectured that these could perhaps stem from cancels still used in the internal postal service. Even though the research concerning this cancel has up to now surfaced no concrete conclusions, it is common knowledge that such old cancels were used especially in 1945 (as well as earlier and even later up to 1948) not only in the internal service, but also on mass mailings, and in towns other than Glauchau. The most well known of the reused cancels ("Nachverwendete") in Glauchau is "GLAUCHAU 1F", with various dates in the cancel. If items are offered to you with the "Q" cancel, extreme caution is advised. It is no secret that in the first turbulent postwar weeks that cancels disappeared in different post offices throughout Germany. These have then surfaced in conjunction with forgeries and other very dubious "Bedarfsbrief".

This especially concerns our second item, the cancel "ORTMANNSDORF (Amtsh.Zwickau)" with various cancel dates. According to the research to date, all strikes with this cancel have been designated as cancel or cover forgeries. This cancel has the wording "Amtsh.Zwickau". The Amtshauptmannschaften were special regional bodies in Saxony and correspond to the usual Landkreise or rural districts. The designation "Kreis" appeared in 1933 in place of "Amtshauptmannschaft" and at the same time the cancel was withdrawn. The cancel was not even allowed in the internal service. The new cancel inscription was now "Ortmannsdorf (Kr.Zwicksu)".

In April-May 1945, due to the position of the demarcation line, Ortmannsdorf was cut off from its master postoffice (Zwickau), and was supplied by the main postoffice Glauchau up until the withdrawal of the Americans towards the middle of June 1945. Since Ortmannsdorf had suffered no harm in the war, the postoffice was intact, and there was no inducement to use the old invalid cancel.

However, there have appeared in the last couple of years both at dealers and at auctions great numbers of "Bedarfsbrief" with this invalid cancel, which are without exception cover or cancel forgeries. Even large covers with complete sets of stamps are found. As a rule these are blue envelopes in DIN format (translator's note: "Deutsche Institut für Norm-- usually has a number appended indicating the Norm standard size) on which repeated addresses have been written with a ballpoint pen, a writing instrument which did not exist in Germany in 1945. Even numerous registered letters have appeared, which bear registration labels of Glauchau and the arrival cancel "(10) CROSSEN-MULDE F". See Illustration 1. On this cover

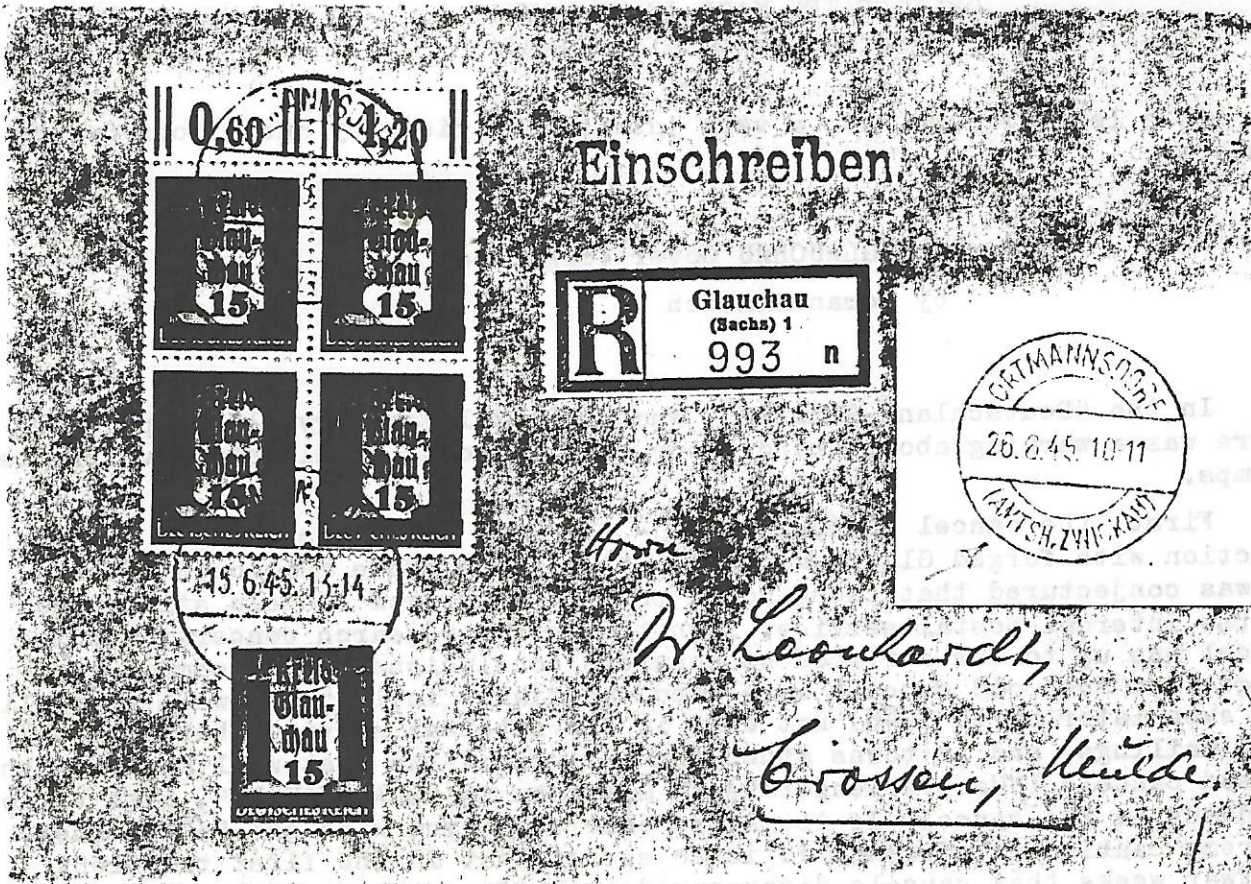


Illustration 1 Cover with cancel "ORTMANNSDORF(AMTSH.ZWICKAU)"

Einschreiben



Herrn
Walter P r e i l
(10) Chemnitz
Bernsdorfer Str. 186a



Illustration 2

An die
Girozentrale Sachen
-Zweiganstalt-



Illustration 3

10 M e r a n e / S a .

Spac- und Girokaffe Lichtenstein i. Sa
Zweigstelle Ortmannsdorf

the cancel strike was made in such a manner that the cancel is distinctly visible (ed--the sending cancel is pictured on the right, the arrival cancel from Crossen is not shown). The arrival cancel CROSSEN, on the other hand, is genuine and is the cancel actually used in 1945.

As franking these covers carry Glauchau stamps, both the Hitler overprints and Dienstmarken, cork obliterations, and various mixed frankings of these. Even the rare type D obliterations, stamps pasted over with pieces of paper, have appeared. Here it appears that the affixed paper pieces originate from brown paper tape strips of a paper quality which did not exist during or shortly after the war. Even more dubious are the registration labels occurring on all registered letters, which carry the designation "Glauchau (Sachs) 1" and the identifying letter "n". It must be understood that in Ortmannsdorf there could not have been in stock any registration labels, and that the postoffice Glauchau could not supply blank labels. Thus, as today, according to the existing postal regulations, the incorrect locality designation should have been changed by handwriting or with a rubber stamp as is shown in Illustration 2 for Thurm. The locality of the cancel and the registration label must in all cases agree. Thus if one correlates all the facts there is the conclusion that both the cancel and cover are forgeries.

It is further interesting that all addresses on these letters, with few exceptions, have the same handwriting, and are always addressed to the same recipients. All registered letters which I have seen have the same recipient: Herrn Dr. Leonhardt, Crossen/Mulde. Further repeated addresses are: Herrn Rudolf Klemm i. Fa. Emil Klemm, Meerane/Sachsen; Herrn Paul Klemm i. Familie Emil Klemm, Glauchau, Mech. Weberei; Fa. Wendisch & Hofmann, Mülsen St. Niclas, Mech. Weberei and probably a couple of others.

For a long time I have sought in vain for an Ortmannsdorf cover with the genuine cancel. A short time ago a Berlin collector let me have such a cover with my thanks, which is shown as Illustration 3, as well as a slide of a moneyorder. Also the expertiser for Saxony obliterations, Herr Rehn, has given me a slide of a cover which was once presented to him for expertisation. All items were franked with obliterations.

It is noticeable when comparing the genuine item with the forgeries that not only the outside form, but the size of the blot differ. The genuine blot is almost circular with a diameter of 18mm., while the forgery blot is irregular and somewhat distorted with a diameter of around 16mm.

Covers with Glauchau overprints or mixed frankings have up to now not been submitted to me with genuine cancels from Ortmannsdorf. This raises the question whether Glauchau overprints were available in Ortmannsdorf at the postal counter. Should a collector possess such a cover I would be very thankful for a copy.

Now for the third item for discussion. How busy "Fabricators" were is shown by what are to my knowledge previously unpublished cancel or cover forgeries. These are shown as Illustrations 4 and 5. Here we have local registered letters from Glauchau, and thus they have no arrival cancels. Two different types are shown. One is on blue DIN format envelopes like the Ortmannsdorf forgeries and franked with #5a or b, 7, and 10. This has the typed address: Fa. H.P.Schulz, z.Zt. Glauchau Sa, Hotel Deutsches Haus. The other (I have 2 of these) is a small yellow envelope, format 15.5 x 9 cm. franked with Michel #1, 5a and b and 7 with the handwritten address: Herrn Paul Klemm, Fa. Emil Klemm, Glauchau, Mech. Weberei. The same handwriting as the Ortmannsdorf forgeries is used, as well as the

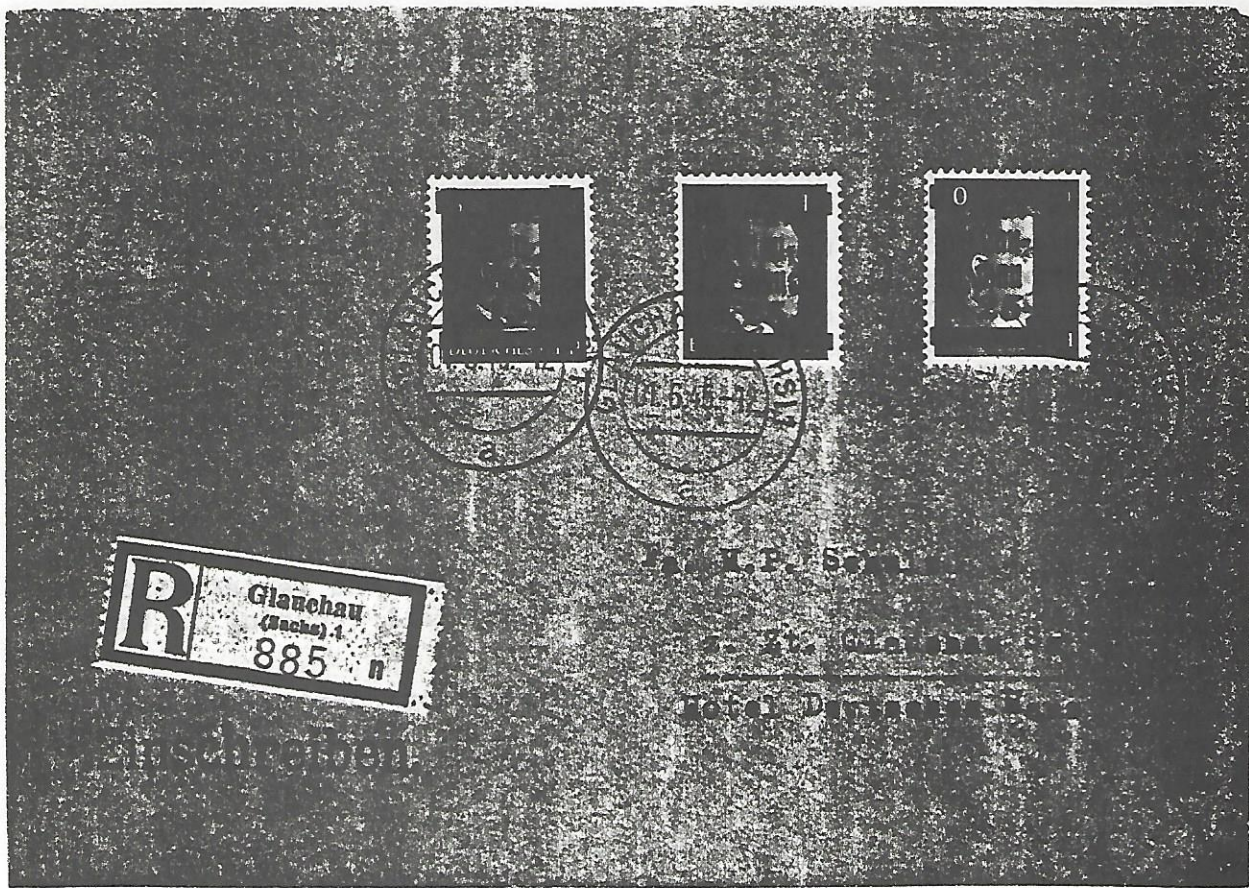
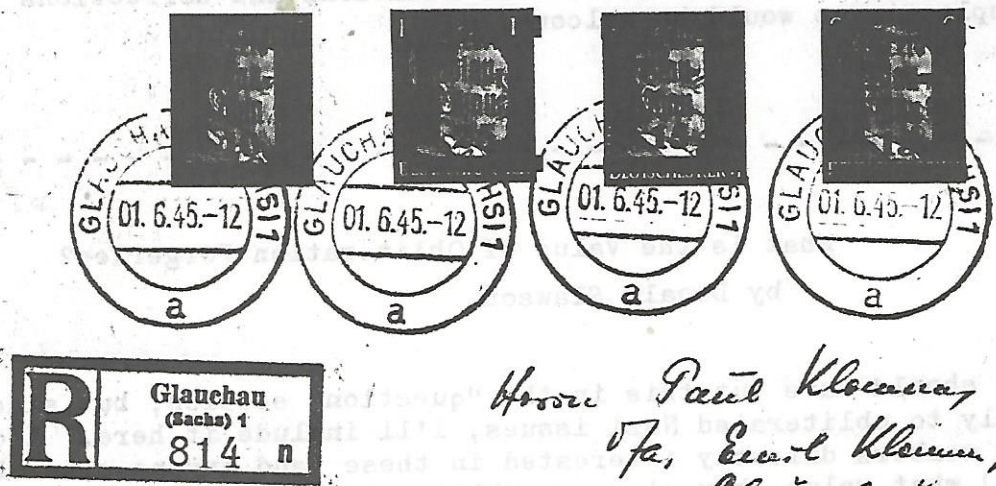


Illustration 4 Glauchau cover with cancel date 1.6.45



Einschreiben.

Illustration 5 Another cover with cancel date 1.6.45

ballpoint pen. Both covers have the cancel "GLAUCHAU(SACHS) 1" with the identifying letter "n". The cancel date 1.6.45 with Michel Nr.'s 1,7 and 10 is, however, quite impossible. It is also doubtful with Michel Nr. 5, since it is not yet fully clear whether these stamps were first available on 1 June or 2 June, 1945. It is certain that Michel Nr. 7 was first available on 7 June, and Michel Nr. 10, as well as the remaining values, were first available on the 14th or 15th of June, 1945. In addition, during the American period of occupation, that is up until a maximum of 15.6.45 (ed--the Americans pulled out on 13 June, so I presume "a maximum of 15 June" is the latest date he figures the Russians got there), only so called "Behördenpost" (Official Mail) was allowed into which category was also included mail from doctors, hospitals/infirmaries, savings and commercial banks, and other businesses concerned with the necessities of life. However, in no case was mail allowed for ordinary citizens. All covers submitted to me up to now from the period before 15.6.45 have either had a hard to read or incomplete cancel impression, or were backdated cancels or cancel forgeries. Further, it is noticeable that the FDC's that have appeared used the registration labels that were used with the Ortmannsdorf covers, all occurring in the 800-999 series, and thus all stem from the same roll.

That here and there a typed address occurs cannot convince us that the forgeries do not all come from the same fabrication. All in all this seems to be a fully developed accomplishment not exactly to the advantage of philately.

In my research I have naturally also attempted to get information from the DDR. The post offices at Glauchau, Zwickau and Ortmannsdorf, as well as the OPD Leipzig were asked for information. The answers came promptly and courteously, but all with the same results: no information since no records are available.

All the more I thank definitely all collectors who supported me in my research, especially Dr. Heinrich Wittmann of Munich who took an interest in the explanation of the Ortmannsdorf cancel. Additions and corrections to this quite complex issue would be welcome.

What is the Value of Obliteration Forgeries?

by Donald Slawson

Perhaps I should have put this in the "question" section, but since it relates directly to obliterated Nazi issues, I'll include it here. I'd like to ask all the members directly interested in these (and anyone else who wants to reply) what value they place on obliteration forgeries? I'm talking about the complete sets with distinctive obliteration, such as Meissen, Fredersdorf, Glauchau, Schwarzenberg, Lobau and the other well known (or at least extremely very common) forgeries. What value, or how much are you willing to pay for these?

I would very much like to get this junk off the market, but quite often I am asked a fair price (say \$10) per set for these, and at this price I certainly cannot afford to buy up all the fakes I encounter. In fact at this price I could afford to make fakes myself.

I would like to know how the rest of you feel about this situation, if you have had any success in getting dealers in donating forgeries, and what you think we can do to improve the situation. Frank Burger and the HOP group seem to have a good relationship with both dealers and collectors, and are able to get the forgeries donated to the group and then make them available to the membership. I'd sure like to see the same thing done with the forged Hitler overprints, for our cases are similar. Maybe it is the free expertising which attracts their business, or the fact that people know that they know what they are doing. How can we get this reputation? How many of us are there really interested in the Hitler obliterations, and how much do we know? What can we do about getting the forgeries off the market?

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QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

This time we have only questions--hopefully, next issue a few answers

1. I have in my collection a normal looking cover bearing 75 pf of postage addressed to the International Red Cross in Zurich, Switzerland from Salzwedel in the British Zone of Germany. The postmark is dated July 18, 1946. The only unusual aspect of the cover is a two line red handstamp at the lower right hand corner reading "Transmis par Serv. Sec. aux. / 1 Aout 1946". Is this a red cross marking? If it is Swiss, I am surprised as Zurich is in the German speaking part of the country. Certainly a French language marking was not applied in the British Zone. Could it have been applied in transit in the French Zone? I guess the stamp would be translated "Transmitted by Auxillary Security Service/ August 1, 1946". Any ideas from anyone?

Richard Imus, American Embassy, FPO San Fran.

96690

The next 2 questions are mine (Slawson).

2. When was the OPD Halle established?
I need to know this to know if the obliterated Hitler stamps of Mühlberg and Wittenberg-Lutherstadt were issued under control of OPD Leipzig or OPD Halle. In May, 1944 Halle and the 2 cities I've mentioned were part of OPD Leipzig. At some time the northern part of OPD Leipzig was combined with OPD Magdeburg to form OPD Halle. There is a commemorative sheetlet with the wording "15. Juni 1945 / Postdirektion Provinz Sachsen/ aus den früheren OPD-Bezirken Halle (Saale) und Magdeburg". This would indicate to me that the OPD Halle existed in 1945, and therefore must have been established under the Nazi's sometime between May, 1944 and war's end. Then in June, 1945 the OPD's Halle and Magdeburg were combined. Only problem with this scinerio is that in June, 1945 the Americans held Halle, Magdeburg and the western part of the future "Postdirektion Provinz Sachsen", while the Soviets held the eastern part (Wittenberg, Torgau, etc.). It does not make sense that an area would be reorganized while it's half under one occupier and half under another. Any clarification sure would be appreciated.
3. How are (or how were, in 1945) OPD orders transmitted from the OPD post office to the subordinate post offices? I would presume by mail, but it seems it might possiblty be by teletype. If by teletype, was it by wire or a wireless (radio) setup?

I presume my 3rd question is very basic to anyone familiar with the German postal system. Also, the question #2 is probably easily answerable by our German friends. I think the answers to my 2 questions are useful, if not necessary, in understanding or forming theories about "cork obliteration" usage. Therefore, I'm hoping our German friends in the obliterations field may take the time to find the answers to these questions.

DES

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Change of address:

Richard H. Imus, American Embassy, FPO San Francisco, 96690 (Dicks' in New Zealand this time)

New members:

Gregory W. Mason, HHD, 512th USA Arty Gp, APO New York 09035

Erik B. Nagel, P.O.Box 65, Taylors, S.C. 29687

Thomas N. Tilles, Main P.O.Box 508, Purchase, N.Y. 10577

Anthony J. Cerrato Jr., 6 Sunset Terrace, Suffern, N.Y. 10901

Have a little space left, and nothing particular to fill it with. Will put in another plug for my own interests. As always, I'm looking for anything the least unusual in the obliterated Nazi issue field. If any of you see anything, let me know. Also after Bedarfsbrief with these issues-- I especially need railroad cancels on "Sachsen Schwarzungen", and have few of the towns of OPD Dresden. Also need the Döbeln, Würzen, Gottleuba, Netzschkau and Meissen issues on Bedarfsbrief. Also especially want the 2 trials from Netzschkau (IIIP and the unnumbered trial discussed below the picture of 2A). Also need mint sets of Fredersdorf, Gottleuba, and Schwarzenberg type I (hinged is O.K.--in fact I prefer them as they can be bought cheaper than unhinged).

If anyone has or sees anything in this area, please let me know.

Slawson